

**Testimony Regarding A Proposal Concerning
FY2010-2011 Governor's Midterm Budget Adjustments:
Supporting the Maintenance of Funding for Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grants
Supporting a Balanced Approach to Narrowing the Budget Deficit**
Cari Carson and Jamey Bell, JD
Appropriations Committee
February 16, 2010

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee:

We submit this written testimony on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, an independent, research-based nonprofit organization dedicated to speaking up for children and youth in the policymaking process that has such a great impact on their lives.

I. Connecticut Voices for Children supports the maintenance of funding for the Education Cost Sharing grant program at the level originally appropriated for FY 11.

The Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant program, found under the "Education Equalization Grants" line item, is the primary state grant program by which state funds are distributed to municipalities for education. The Governor recommended in her budget adjustments that ECS be maintained at the original 2010-2011 budgeted amount of \$1.89 billion.¹ Maintenance of funding for ECS is important to preserving quality public educational programming for all Connecticut students. We commend the Governor for preserving this funding and ask the Legislature to support preservation of this funding as well.

II. Connecticut Voices for Children supports using a balanced approach, including increased revenues, to decrease Connecticut's budget deficit.

Rather than relying on spending cuts that damage the state's economy and hurt our ability to invest in the future, we need a more balanced approach that includes revenues. As in other states, this crushing national recession is causing big problems for families. Just as people's needs are rising dramatically, the revenues the state has to meet those needs are falling. More than ever today, people need access to quality health care, child care, jobs, and education. So we have to fill that gap between people's growing needs and what it takes to meet them.

¹ The only reduction to the ECS line item was the removal of what would have been a \$426,769 non-formula increase to Stamford.

Connecticut Voices for Children urges you to support revenue options to help resolve this problem, including closing corporate tax loopholes through combined reporting, evaluating the hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate tax breaks to see whether CT is getting an economic return on its investment, delaying reductions in the estate tax, and increasing income taxes on households that are most able to pay.

Thank you very much.